

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending. As the above amendment are presented in the format described by the proposed revision to 37 CFR § 1.121, no clean copy of the amended claims is provided. New claim 19 is supported by originally filed claim 6.

I. Claim Objections

Claims 1-18 stand objected to for informal matters. The Office Action objects to the term “radiation curable lacquer”. In response, the term has been replaced in the claims with “lacquer curable by radiation”, as supported in the present specification at page 8, second full paragraph.

II. Drawings

The drawings stand objected to under 37 CFR § 1.183(a) as allegedly not showing every feature recited by the claims. Specifically, the Office Action states that the process set forth by claims 1-18 is not shown. In response, Applicants have provided Fig. 2. Support for the new figure can be found at page 12 of the specification. The specification has also been amended to reflect the drawing amendment. No new matter has been entered.

III. 35 USC § 112

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 USC § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim that which is considered the invention. In response, claim 7 has been amended to eliminate any lack of antecedent basis. No new matter has been entered.

IV. 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-5 and 18 stand rejected under 35 USC § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by van de Hoeven (U.S. Patent No. 4,789,604). The Office Action asserts that this reference teaches each feature of the rejected claims. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

A. Claim 1

In particular, Applicants respectfully present that van de Hoeven fails to teach that the lacquer is printed in a predetermined pattern covering only parts of the surface. Claim 1 has been amended to emphasize that a portion of the decorative upper surface remains uncovered, as supported throughout the specification.

In contrast to the partial covering of the decorative upper surface of the present invention, Applicants respectfully present that the structure of van der Hoeven includes complete covering of the decorative layer (identified as plastics film 3) by liquid layer 2. It is through the covering of the plastics layer 3 and curing of the liquid layer 2 thereon, is the decorative panel of the reference “resistant to weathering, acids and solvents”. Thus, not only does the reference not teach each feature recited by the claims, it actually teaches away from those missing features.

B. Claim 5

With respect to claims 4 and 5, Applicants respectfully present that the passage cited by the Office Action does not teach the particular feature recited by these claims. Specifically, claim 4 (from which claim 5 depends) recites that the “lacquer curable by radiation includes hard particles with an average particle size in the range 50nm - 150 μ m” (emphasis added), while the cited passage states “the films of a thickness of 20 to 60 μ m are used” (emphasis added).

Even if the films of van der Hoeven contained “hard particles”, as defined by claim 4, the film thickness described in this passage is unrelated to the size of the particles. In fact, the inorganic particles in the pigments of the films of the reference “usually have a particle size from 0.1 to 20 μ m, the average particle size being within the range from 0.1 to 4 μ m” are well outside the presently recited range. Thus, Applicants respectfully present that neither claim 4 nor claim 5 is anticipated by van der Hoeven.

V. Conclusion

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that all objections and rejections are overcome. Thus, a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



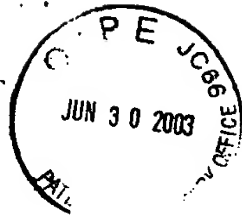
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U.S. Appl. No. 09/718,381

ATTACHMENT - Figure 2

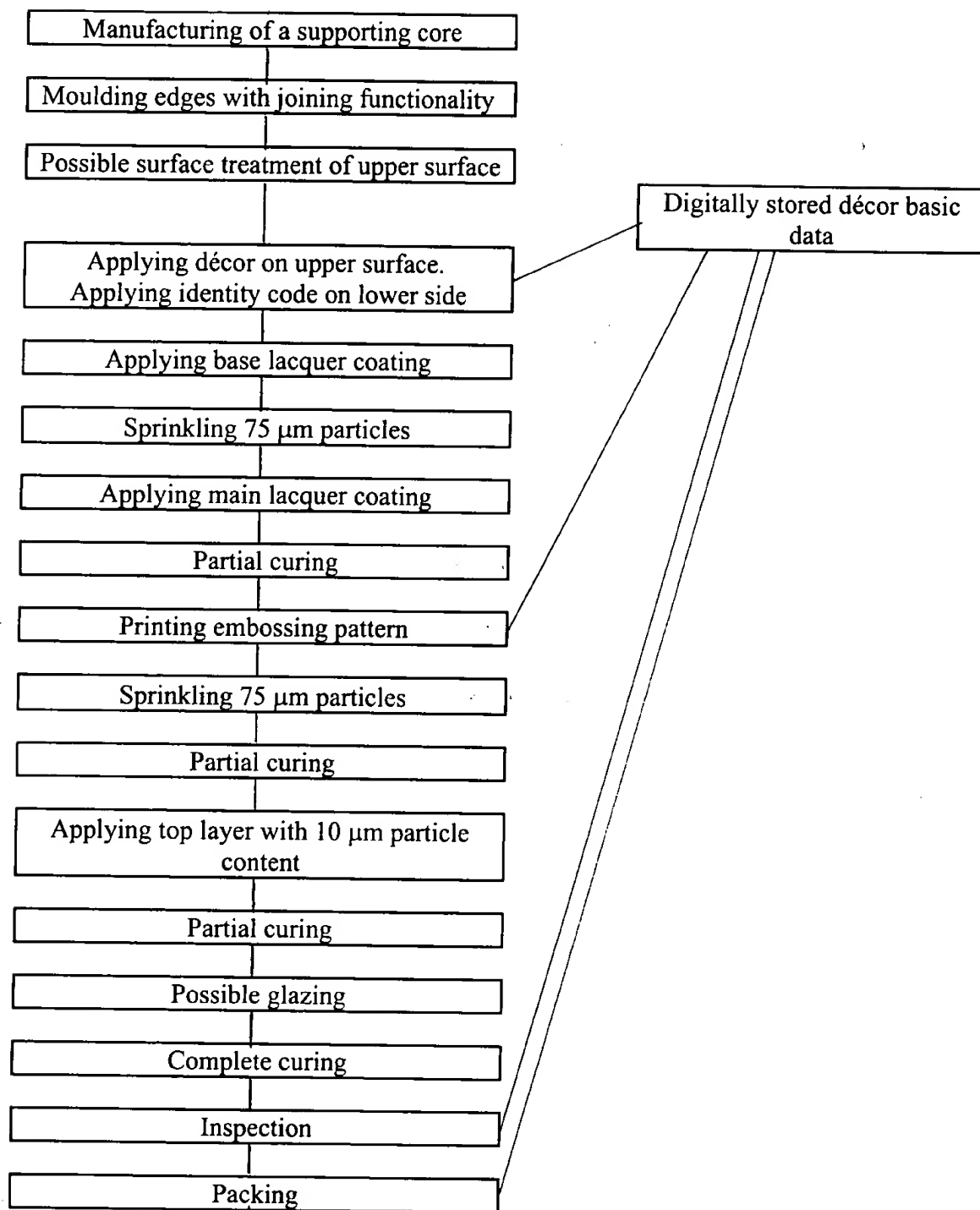
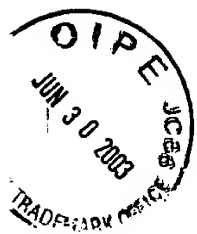


FIGURE 2